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WORLD

Olympics over, Roh turns toward reunification

By Edward Neilan
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SEOUL, South Korea — President Roh Tae-woo, saying the successful Seoul Olympics showed the nation "we can do anything to which we put our mind," repeated today his willingness to meet North Korean President Kim Il-sung to discuss reunification of the peninsula.

Mr. Roh said he would soon present a new national unification formula, pledged to further expand ties with socialist countries, particularly the Soviet Union and China, and promised to "take the lead in realizing a clean and honest government."

In a speech prepared for delivery to the National Assembly this afternoon when he presents the 1989 budget bill, Mr. Roh noted that some Koreans are worried that inflation or recession might follow the Seoul Olympics. "I believe that on the whole we can have confidence in our economy," he said.

"I will assign top policy priority to price stabilization, since it is my unwavering conviction that unless inflation is firmly held in check, our efforts to boost exports, maintain growth and improve income distri-

bution will all be futile."

Saying he hoped to bring about a "spring of reconciliation" between South and North Korea, Mr. Roh recalled his July 7 declaration seeking an end to South-North confrontation and proposing to meet the North's President Kim to discuss "any and all issues."

Noting that a Sept. 8 response by Mr. Kim seemed to agree to a summit, with some preconditions, Mr. Roh said: "I made it clear that I am willing to visit Pyongyang to meet with him." He added that a North-South summit should be held "without any restriction, (but with) frank discussions on all pending issues raised by both sides, including a joint declaration of non-aggression and the unification of our homeland."

An indication of North Korean intentions toward a summit and reconciliation is expected at a meeting of national legislators from both sides Oct. 13 at the armistice village of Panmunjom. Four previous meetings in August floundered mainly on questions of form for a larger conference, rather than on substance.

On the new national unification formula he will present to the nation soon, Mr. Roh said it will "crystallize

the views and opinions of citizens from all walks of life."

He said a national unification formula should be practicable and acceptable to both sides, rather than wrapped in Cold War rhetoric or biased in favor of one party.

Nothing that since his inauguration, the doors to exchanges between

level permanent missions and called it "significant" that South Korea and China have broken a half-century barrier of separation and are now progressively boosting bilateral exchanges and cooperation.

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South Korea and socialist countries have been opened much wider, Mr. Roh said the participation in the Seoul Olympics of the Soviet Union, China and major socialist nations in Eastern Europe would go a long way toward dismantling East-West barriers.

He hailed the agreement with Hungary to exchange ambassadors-

level permanent missions and called it "significant" that South Korea and China have broken a half-century barrier of separation and are now progressively boosting bilateral exchanges and cooperation.

"I also put positive construction on the fact that Secretary Gorbachev of the Soviet Union has indicated in economic development, including the development of Siberia," he said.

Mr. Roh warned that even though world politics is now moving in the direction of greater openness and cooperation, the security situation on the Korean peninsula and in Northeast Asia "remains as grave as ever." He said should another military provocation and conflict occur on the peninsula, "our achievements would all go up in smoke overnight."

Turning to democratization at home, Mr. Roh said the authoritarian rule that caused public anxiety, tension, distrust and strife for the past four decades "has unmistakably been abolished."

He said he would keep his promise to build a new democratic nation and would not abuse governmental power to advance the interests of the governing party.

On the touchy question of submitting himself to an interim evaluation, Mr. Roh said he would do this without fail "through means acceptable to the public."

Ruling party aides say the president overstepped himself in making that pledge earlier, since it amounts to a referendum on the presidency, which is unconstitutional. Opposi-

tion politicians are expected to hold the president to his promise to submit to some kind of confidence vote.

Yesterday, meanwhile, the government released more than 1,000 prisoners, including 52 political offenders, under an amnesty marking National Foundation Day, a major national holiday. The Associated Press reported.

Opposition parties, which have demanded the release of "all political prisoners," called it inadequate.

Kim Dae-jung, president of the Party for Peace and Democracy, said "only one-tenth of the prisoners of conscience" were freed but gave no overall figures.

Among those amnestied were Lee Tae-bok, a 38-year-old publisher whose release was demanded by delegates to the World Congress of PEN in Seoul last month. PEN, a London-based organization of literary figures, said Mr. Lee was arrested in 1981 on charges of plotting to organize a leftist underground and fomenting a communist rebellion through a publishing company he owned.

Three other imprisoned writers whose release was sought by PEN were excluded from yesterday's amnesty.